DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 417 002 PS 026 298

AUTHOR Chang, I. Joyce; Katsurada, Emiko
TITLE Context of Physical Punishment: A Cross Cultural Comparison.
PUB DATE 1997-11-00
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the NCFR Fatherhood and Motherhood in a Diverse and Changing World (59th, Arlington, VA, November 7-10, 1997).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Behavior Problems; Child Behavior; College Students; *Context Effect; *Corporal Punishment; *Cross Cultural Studies; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Recall (Psychology); *Student Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS Japan; United States

ABSTRACT

This cross-cultural study was designed to overcome some limitations of previous research by not only inquiring into general attitudes toward physical punishment, but also by obtaining information concerning the context (for example, situation, type of misbehavior, and form of physical punishment). A cross-cultural comparison was made of attitudes of 227 college students in the United States and Japan. Participants responded to a questionnaire yielding data on their general attitudes toward physical punishment and perceptions of appropriate discipline method using four hypothetical scenarios. The results indicated that the experiences of physical punishment by the U.S. and Japanese samples were similar. However, the U.S. participants reported a higher likelihood of being hit with an object than the Japanese participants. For the U.S. sample, the buttocks and the hand were the top two sites on the body used for physical punishment, whereas the head and the face were the top two places for the Japanese sample. The type of child's misbehavior was found to have an impact on the Japanese participants' views on the appropriate discipline method. The U.S. participants' views on the appropriate discipline method were not differentiated by the gender of the child or the type of child's misbehavior. The questionnaire is appended. (Contains 17 references.) (Author/EV)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 417 002

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CONTEXT OF PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT:

A CROSS CULTURAL COMPARISON

I. Joyce Chang Ph.D.

Department of Human Environmental Sciences,

Central Missouri State University

Emiko Katsurada Ph.D.

Department of Comparative Literature,

Miyazaki International College, Japan

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
I. Joyce Chang
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

Abstract

Although physical punishment has been studied for several decades, there are still substantial gaps in the understanding of essential areas, such as the most frequently used form, context, and cross cultural differences. This cross cultural study is designed to overcome some limitations of previous research by inquiring into not only general attitudes toward physical punishment, but also obtaining information concerning the context (e.g., situation, type of misbehavior and form of physical punishment.) A cross-cultural comparison was made using 227 college students in the US and Japan. Participants responded to a questionnaire yielding data on their general attitudes toward physical punishment and perceptions of appropriate discipline method using four hypothetical scenarios. The results indicated that the experiences of physical punishment by the American (91%) and Japanese (86%) samples were similar. However, the American participants reported a higher likelihood of being hit with an object than the Japanese participants were. For the American sample, the bottom and the hand were the top two sites on the body used for physical punishment, whereas the head and the face were the top two places for the Japanese sample. The type of child's misbehavior was found to have an impact on the Japanese participants' views on the appropriate discipline method. The American participants' views on the appropriate discipline method were not differentiated by the gender of the child and the type of child's misbehavior.

PS 026298

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

CONTEXT OF PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT:

A CROSS CULTURAL COMPARISON

I. Joyce Chang Ph.D.

Department of Human Environmental Sciences,

Central Missouri State University

Emiko Katsurada Ph.D.

Department of Comparative Literature,

Miyazaki International College, Japan

© 1997. All rights reserved by the authors.

Permission must be obtained from the authors to copy or quote. Permission is granted only to copy for use in the Theory Construction and Research Methodology Workshop in Crystal City, VA, November 5 & 6, 1997. All citations in other works to this paper should refer to it as a presentation given at the workshop.

CONTEXT OF PHYSICAL PUNISHMENT:

A CROSS CULTURAL COMPARISON

I. Joyce Chang Ph.D.

Emiko Katsurada Ph.D.

Physical punishment or corporal punishment refers to "an act by parents intended to cause the child physical pain but not injury, for purposes of correction or control of misbehavior" (p.543, Straus & Donnelly, 1994). Although the American Psychological Association and the American Medical Association both oppose physical punishment of children and advocate other behavioral modification methods (Strong & DeVault, 1995), physical punishment remains the most common form of practiced discipline in our society. According to Graziano, Lindquist, Kunce and Munjal (1992), over 90% of American college students reported that they had been physically punished during their childhood. Various studies have documented both the short-term and long-term negative consequences of physical punishment. One of the most prominent research projects was conducted by Straus and Donnelly who surveyed over 9,000 families. Based on the exploration of two decades of research, Straus and Donnelly (1994) concluded that children who are spanked regularly are from two to six times more likely to be physically aggressive, to become juvenile delinquents, and later as adults, to use physical violence against their spouses, exhibit sadomasochistic tendencies, and to suffer from depression (Straus & Donnelly, 1994). Past research has indicated factors such as culture and age of the child to be associated with physical punishment (Powers & Eckenrode, 1988). However, whether it is more acceptable for the mother or father to use physical punishment is unknown.

Cultural differences between Japan and the United States are reflected in different childrearing patterns. American parents emphasize independence and individualism, while Japanese parents stress conformity and acceptance of group goals (Power, Kobayashi-Winata, & Kelley, 1992). Ellis and Petersen (1992) found that the more conformity is valued relative to self-reliance, the more often corporal punishment

was used in childrearing. The combination of these studies suggest that Japanese parents use corporal punishment more often than American counterparts.

A national survey of parental discipline in Japan indicated that approximately half of the parents used physical punishment sometimes and more than half (62%) of the interviewed parents agreed that physical punishment was necessary (Hiratsuka, 1973). "Children can feel love from parents by being hit" was a viewpoint frequently expressed by both Japanese fathers and mothers. A more recent survey of public opinion about physical punishment indicated that 81% acknowledged that the use of physical punishment depends on the situation (Hayashida, 1986).

Moreover, physical punishment at school has been a controversial issue in Japan. Many researchers, educators, and journalists have reported that corporal punishment by teachers is still very common in Japanese junior high schools and high schools (Aoki, & Manita, 1986; Hoshino, Maki, & Imahashi, 1984; Maki, Imahashi, Hayashi, & Terasaki, 1992; Sakamoto, 1995). As a matter of fact, a preliminary survey of physical punishment among Japanese college students conducted before this study indicated that 68% of them had experiences of physical punishment at school, most of it by teachers. Considering this situation, it seems that Japanese are more tolerant of physical punishment than Americans.

The question of whether there is a regional difference on the attitude toward physical punishment has been raised by previous studies. Respondents from the northeastern United States were found to be less favorable toward physical punishment than were respondents from other regions (Flynn, 1994). Research comparing the United States with other countries on the use of physical punishment have yielded mixed findings. What one culture defines as abusive, another culture might define as appropriate or even mandatory. Compared to Americans, Asians are more tolerant toward physical punishment. However, the type of physical punishment most frequently used may vary due to culture. For example, spanking was the most frequently used physical punishment by American parents, whereas more parents in India used slapping most frequently (Ima & Honm, 1991). One study by Power (1992) found that US mothers expected their children to follow more rules than did Japanese mothers,

but Japanese mothers were more likely to use physical punishment when their children showed disrespect for authority. On the other hand, a study by Englehart and Hale (1990) found no differences in physical punishment between the US sample and the Japanese sample. In order to fully understand the impact of culture on the use of physical punishment, more cross cultural research is needed.

Although physical punishment has been studied for several decades, there are still substantial gaps in the understanding of essential areas, such as the most frequently used form, context, and cross cultural/regional differences. The current study is designed to overcome some limitations of previous research by inquiring into not only general attitudes toward physical punishment, but also obtaining information concerning the context (e.g, situation, type of misbehavior and form of physical punishment.)

This exploratory study was designed to investigate the context of physical punishment by hypothesized various forms of child misbehaviors and making cross cultural comparisons of the attitudes of people concerning appropriate responses to those behaviors. This study was guided by three questions: (a) what was the most frequently indicated form of physical punishment and its relationship to the type of child's misbehaviors; (b) did gender of the child and type of child's misbehavior have an impact on people's attitude toward using physical punishment; (c) was attitude toward physical punishment similar or different among American and Japanese college students?

Method

Sample

The American participants were 120 college students (58% female, 42% male) attending a Midwestern University who enrolled in general education classes. The mean age for the American participants was 20.98 (*SD* = 3.82). The participants, who were predominantly Caucasian (80%) were randomly assigned to receive four different versions of surveys. The Japanese participants were 107 college students (68%

female, 32% male) from psychology and Japanese expression classes. The mean age for the Japanese sample was 20.48 (*SD* = 3.46).

Measure

The questionnaire designed for this survey consisted of three sections: (1) general attitudes toward physical punishment: (2) a hypothetical situation, and (3) demographic information.

Attitude Toward Physical Punishment (ATPP) Section one contained 16 Likert type items regarding general attitudes toward physical punishment; for example, "Physical punishment is helpful to children." ATPP Items were selected from surveys created by Graziano et. al.(1992) and by Straus (1994). The responses were coded on a five-point scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The sum of the sixteen items was used as the score for ATPP. A higher score indicated more acceptance of physical punishment.

The Appropriate Use of Punishment (AUP) Section two consisted of a hypothetical situation followed by questions relating to the appropriateness of parental punishment. Four versions of the vignette (2 x 2 design) were presented to students, followed by questions regarding the appropriateness of the use of various discipline methods. The hypothetical situation given involved a couple with two children (five years old and seven years old). The vignettes varied in terms of the types of child's misbehavior (talk back to parent or not talk back) and gender of the child (boy or girl). In the " talk back" version (version A and B), the child ignored parent's request and yelled " I hate you, I hate you." In the "not talk back" parent version (version C and D), the child simply replied "Okay." In version A and C, the child was a boy. In version B and D, the child was a girl (Appendix A). Likert type questions regarding how appropriate it is for the parent to use various forms of discipline (e.g., time out, privilege withdrawal, spanking by hand, slapping and hitting with an object) were given to the participants after they had read the vignettes. Their responses were coded on a five-point scale from "strongly disagree to "strongly agree". The sum of the responses (AUP) was used as an indicator of participant's evaluation on the appropriateness of punishment. The higher score indicated more acceptance of physical punishment.

Section three consists of demographic background information on the participants, such as gender, age, major, past experience of physical punishment.

Procedure

Participants took this survey on a voluntary basis. An informed consent letter was first shown to the participants. This survey was both confidential and anonymous. This survey took approximately 10-15 minutes to complete and participants were informed that there was no right or wrong answer and they could leave at any time during the survey. US participants were randomly assigned to one of the four scenarios.

Results

Past Physical Punishment

The majority of American participants reported they had been physically punished (91%). Sixty-two percent reported having been hit with an object. No gender difference was found on both the past physical punishment and the experience of having been hit with an object. Bottom (97%), hand(71%), leg (31%), arm (30%) and face (26%) are the most frequently reported places on the body targeted for physical punishment.

Eighty-six percent of the Japanese sample answered that they have had experiences of being physically punished. However, only 35% of them reported that they were ever hit with an object by their parents. Consistent with the result found in the American sample, there were no gender differences in these experiences. Head (76%), face (56%), bottom (47%), hand (33%), and legs (27%) are the most frequently reported places on the body for physical punishment.

No difference was found between the American and the Japanese samples on the experience of physical punishment by parents. However, the American sample reported more frequent incidences of being hit with an object than the Japan sample ($\chi 2$ (1, N = 227) = 4.87, p < .05.) The American sample reported a higher incidence of the bottom, hand, and arm being the site of physical punishment, whereas the Japanese sample reported a higher incidence of physical punishment to the head and

face (see Table 1). The only gender difference on the reported common sites on the body used for physical punishment was found within the American sample. American women were more likely to be slap on the face (35%) than American men (16%) X^2 (1, N = 116) = 5.16, $p < .05$.

The appropriate use of punishment (AUP)

The answers regarding the appropriate discipline (AUP) from the scenario indicated that the Americans were more likely to perceive physical punishment as being appropriate discipline than were the Japan participants t (222) = 5.74, $p < .001$. In examining the perception of the appropriate use of punishment in the hypothetical situations, ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of the type of misbehavior and the gender of the child. For the American sample, the type of child's misbehavior and gender of the child were not predictors of the participant's evaluation of the appropriate punishment. Withdrawing privileges, grounding and giving "time out" were the most acceptable forms of discipline among the American participants.

For The Japanese sample, the results indicated that there was a significant difference in the responses regarding the appropriate use of punishment (AUP) among the four groups (F = 19.57, $p < .001$). Subsequent post hoc analysis showed that the significant difference was only between the type of a child's misbehavior ($p <$ .001). Those who read version A, where a boy talked back to his parent and ruined the dinner party, agreed more strongly with using physical punishment than the group who read version B, where a boy obeyed his parents but still ruined the dinner party by accident. The same pattern was found for the versions C vs. D in which the child was a girl. However, gender of the child had no effect on the use of punishment.

Cross cultural comparisons within each version were also conducted. No differences were found between the American and the Japanese samples for version A and C. The American participants scored higher on the acceptance of physical punishment in version B t (50) = 6.16, $p < .001$ and version D t (54) = 7.55, $p < .001$ than The Japanese participants who have the same versions.

The positive correlations between Attitude Toward Physical Punishment (ATPP) and Acceptance use of Punishment (AUP) were found among both THE AMERICAN sample ($r = .28$, $p < .01$) and Japan sample ($r = .26$, $p < .01$).

Attitude toward physical punishment (ATPP)

Overall, the American participants had a more favorable attitude toward physical punishment than Japan participants t (225) =2.64, $p< .05$). Within the American sample, people who was physically punished had a more favorable attitude toward physical punishment than those who had never been punished physically t (118)=6.38, $p < .001$. In addition, American men had a more favorable attitude toward physical punishment than American women t (116) =2.73, $p <.01$. Attitude toward physical punishment did not correlate with age, religious strength or number of children. Furthermore, no gender difference was found in the American sample on attitude toward physical punishment.

Within the Japanese sample, gender of the participant and the past physical punishment experience had no effect on attitude toward physical punishment. However, participants' age correlated significantly with their attitude toward physical punishment ($\underline{r} = .296$, $\underline{p} < .01$). Participants' age was also correlated with their religious strength ($\underline{r} = .21$, $\underline{p} < .05$).

Dissussion

The positive correlations between Attitude Toward Physical Punishment (ATPP) and Appropriate Use of Punishment (AUP) indicate construct validity for the scale used in the current study. No scenario differences was found in Attitude Toward Physical Punishment (ATPP) which denotes a successful randomization of participants.

The experiences of physical punishment by parents by the American (91%) and Japanese (86%) samples were similar. The American participants were more likely to report being hit with an object than Japanese participants were. However, the Japanese participants may have experienced more incidents of physical punishment because it is commonly practiced at schools. In addition, whether the participants report honestly about their experience of physical punishment remains unknown.

Common sites on the body used for physical punishment varied. The bottom and the hand were the top two places for the Americans, whereas the head and the face were the top two places for the Japanese. Whether the places on the body simply reflect cultural and historical differences or can be denoted as severity of punishment needs further investigation. Receiving punishment on the face or the head may be more hurtful emotionally than on the bottom or the hand. It is important to know that the American women surveyed did report being slapped on the face more than American men did. Whether this particular form of physical punishment, slapping on the face, has the same meaning for the Americans as for Japanese requires further investigation.

Within the Japanese sample, the type of child's misbehavior was found to have an impact on the participants' view of punishment. Japanese participants did consider talking back to a parent to be inappropriate, and therefore they felt that the child deserve more severe punishment. However, no version effect was found in the American sample. In other words, the American participants' views of acceptable use of punishment were not related to the type of child's misbehavior and the gender of the child. There are several possible explanations. One may speculate that the American participants take the child's intention into account. After all, the child ruined the party by accident in all cases. Another possibility is that the participants may have been more tolerant of a child's disrespectful verbal language than the Japanese participants were. It is also possible that the American participants' view of the acceptable use of physical punishment may be based on other factors that were not covered by the variation of the versions.

Although physical punishment has been studied frequently, the context of physical punishment has not been fully researched. A better understanding of the context of physical punishment has important implications for researchers and educators. The results of this study will be used as a guideline to conduct cross cultural and regional study on the context of physical punishment. Any comments that can help improve this study will be greatly appreciated.

Table 1: Reported Common Sites on the Body for Physical Punishment

	U.S.	Japan	Chi Square
Bottom	97%	47%	72.19***
Face	26%	56%	19.95***
Head	5%	76%	116.00***
Hand	71%	33%	31.74***
Arm	30%	14%	7.62***
Legs	31%	27%	n.s.
Chest	0%	0%	n.s.
Abdomen	0%	3%	n.s.
Others	0%	1%	n.s.

References

Aoki, T. & Manita, A. (Eds.). (1986). *Taibatsu o kangaeru* [Thinking about corporal punishment]. Tokyo, Japan: Tosho Bunka sha.

De Paul, J., Milner, J. S., & Mugica, P. (1995). Childhood maltreatment, childhood social support and child abuse potential in an international sample. *Child Abuse & Neglect, 19*, 907-920.

Englehart, R. J., & Hale, D. B. (1990). Punishment, nail-biting, and nightmares: A cross-cultural study. *Journal of Multicultural Counselling and Development, 18*, 129-132.

Ellis, G. J., & Petersen, L. R. (1992). Socialization values and parental control techniques: A cross-cultural analysis of child-rearing. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies,* 13, 39-54.

Flynn, C. P. (1994). Regional differences in attitudes toward corporal punishment. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 56*, 314-324

Graziano, A. M, Lindquist, C. M., Kunce, L. J. and Munjal, K. (1992). Physical punishment in childhood and current attitudes: An exploratory comparison of college students in the United States and India. Journal of interpersonal Violence, 7, 147-155

Hayashida, H. (1986). Taibatsu mondai no konnichiteki jyoukyou [Current situations of corporal punishment at school]. In T. Aoki & A. Manita (Eds.), *Taibatsu o kangaeru* (pp. 15-25). Tokyo, Japan: Tosho Bunka sha.

Hiratsuka, M. (Ed.). (1973). *Nihon no katei to kodomo* [Families and children in Japan]. Tokyo, Japan: Kaneko shobo.

Hoshino, Y., Maki, M., & Imahashi, M. (Eds.). (1984*). Taibatsu to kodomo no jinken* [Corporal punishment and children's right]. Tokyo, Japan: Eidell

Ima, K., & Hohm C. F. (1991). Child maltreatment among Asian and Pacific islander refugees and immigrants. Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 6, 267-285

 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Maki, M., Imahashi, M., Hayashi, K., & Terasaki, H. (Eds.). (1992). *Choukai/Taibatsu no housei to jittai* [Laws and realities about discipline/corporal punishment]. Tokyo, Japan: Gakuyo shobou.

Powers, J. L, & Eckenrode, J. (1988). The maltreatment of adolescents. *Child Abuse and Neglect, 12*, 189-199.

Power, T. G., Kobayashi-Winata, H., & Kelley, M. L. (l992). Childrearing patterns in Japan and the United States: A cluster analytic study, *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 15,* 185-205.

Sakamoto, H. (1995). *Taibatsu no kenkyu* [Studies on corporal punishment]. Tokyo, Japan: San Ichi shobou.

Straus, M. A. & Donnelly, G. K. (1994). Corporal punishment of adolescents by parents: a risk factor in the epidemiology of depression, suicide, alcohol abuse, child abuse and wife beating. *Adolescence*, 29, 543-561

Strong, B., DeVault, C. (1995*). The Marriage and Family Experience*. West Publication: St. Paul,MN

Turner, H. A., & Finkelhor, D. (1996). Corporal punishment as a stressor among youth. *Journal of Marriage and the Family, 58*, 155-166

Appendix A

Scenario (A)

John and Mary have two children. *Jacob* is 7 years old and Jessica is 5 years old. John's parents have been married for fifty years and there is going to be a nice dinner to celebrate their 50th anniversary. The dinner is held at a nice restaurant. Before they leave, John and Mary told their children that this is a very special family gathering and they want their children to behave themselves in the restaurant. Not fighting, hitting and running.

It is a very nice restaurant. Live music, beautiful interior design and delicious cuisine. Half way through the dinner, Jacob starts acting up. First, he pulled Jessica's hair and got into an argument with his younger cousin, Jason. Then Jacob left his seat and was running wildly in the restaurant. Everyone is having a good time and all other children are behaving themselves but Jacob. John and Mary feel embarrassed and furious by Jacob's behavior, but they do not want to spoil this wonderful event by making a scene. When Jacob ran close by, Mary held Jacob's arm and said in a tender voice: "Jacob, honey, remember what we have talked about before we left home? Why don't you sit down now?" Jacob replied loudly: "Let go, NO." Mary said with a firm voice : "Jacob, I want you to stop running and sit in your chair now." Jacob protested even more aggressively, he screamed loudly *"No, let go of me. I hate you! I hate you!!"* He somehow escaped from Mary and ran away quickly. Accidentally, he also pulled the table cloth with him and "CRASH". Food and broken dishes were everywhere. It was such a big mess. John and Mary kept apologizing to their family members for ruining this wonderful event. When they got home, they were furious.

According to your opinion, what would be an appropriate discipline for Jacob? (check all that apply)

		Very Inappropriate	Inappropriate		Appropriate	Very Appropriate
1	Withdraw privilege (e.g., no TV)	1	2	3	4	5
2	Grounded for one week	1	2	3	4	5
3	Time out	1	2	3	4	5
4	Physical punishment (slap on face)	1	2	3	4	5
5	Physical punishment (hand hitting hand)	1	2	3	4	5
6	Physical punishment (hand hitting child's head)	1	2	3	4	5
7	Physical punishment (hand hitting child's bottom)	1	2	3	4	5
8	Physical punishment (hand hitting child's abdomen)	1	2	3	4	5
9	Physical punishment (hand hitting child's arm)	1	2	3	4	5
10	Physical punishment (hand hitting child's leg)	1	2	3	4	5

Note:

The other versions varied in terms of child's misbehavior and the gender of the child.